

Project Background

Late Bloomer Ranch LLC started in 2019 as a working farm and ranch in Driggs, Idaho. Seeking to provide the highest quality products with the least impact on the local environment, Late Bloomer uses rotation grazing techniques, organic management principles, and animal-welfare focused practices to produce pasture-raised pork, eggs, fruit, and cut-flowers. Located on the former 65 acre Moffat farm that was previously operated as an organic alfalfa farm, Late Bloomer Ranch is looking to expand on that organic history and integrate new enterprises to create a truly diverse and community-rooted farm for the benefit of the region.

Late Bloomer Ranch is seeking to add a permanent campground for 7 airstream trailers and/or tiny houses on wheels as a key element of our farming enterprise vision. The Campground will enhance our long range plan by providing year-round, short-term housing and lodging for farm employees, participants in our farm incubator program, and farm guests. By adding this secondary enterprise to our primary business of pasture-based livestock production, organic fruit, and cut-flower production, we aim to increase our farm's viability and scope and to advance our efforts to provide meaningful integrated agriculture training, employment, and farm experiences to people living in or visiting the Driggs community..

Access to on-farm housing is a central part of the Late Bloomer Ranch vision. In an era where the driving force in agriculture is lowering prices, agricultural workers are often paid below minimum wage for long hours and in poor working conditions. Late Bloomer Ranch is committed to farming another way, where all employees are valued and able to earn a living wage. The best way we can reach that vision is through offering housing for the people we employ as part of a comprehensive compensation package.

Part of our long-term vision for the farm, in tandem with the Campground on-site, is to add an incubator program for new and beginning farmers in the region. The concept for this program is to provide leases for small acreages (1/4 acre - 2 acres each), with access to water and power, tool sharing, and markets, coupled with programs for best practices, for complementary new farm businesses to get up and running. An essential aspect to this model is to provide an affordable housing option for folks wishing to participate who do not have access to housing already. Starting a farm business is hard enough, starting a farm business in an area with a high cost of living can be nearly impossible.

Lastly, farm stays are part of our vision. We aim to bring folks to the farm to learn about our practices, participate in farm events, and just connect to the beauty of integrated agriculture. Given the farm's close proximity to downtown Driggs, we hope that eco-tourism will be a win-win for the farm, other local businesses, and the community in general.

The Campground

The concept for the Campground location and layout is to have a pleasant space with airstreams and tiny houses that fit the aesthetic and functional goals of our farm. By creating trailer pads that are spacious, private, aesthetically pleasing, and well maintained, we hope to create a wonderful living experience for our guests and farm participants. All the campsites are arranged around central services and amenities, such as our toilet, shower, and laundry area, as well as the fenced dog run, where guests and employees can have access to not only their individual campers, but also shared resources that will enhance their experience. This will not be a facility that crams nightly travelers in next to each other to maximize every square inch of available space. Instead, these well-designed and appointed trailer and tiny house pads will be individual housing areas providing privacy and tranquility. We plan to utilize regionally-appropriate landscaping and attractive fencing to not only provide privacy for the folks staying at Late Bloomer, but also to respect the view corridor of neighbors and passersby.

As mentioned in our concept for the Campground, our intention is to attract farm employees, incubator participants, and guests to the farm that align with our practices and ethos about land and community. Practically, this means we will only accept guests at the Campground that will treat the land, and their neighbors, with respect. The owners of Late Bloomer Ranch and/or their key personnel will be living on the Late Bloomer property, ensuring that our standards are adhered to at all times. There are two parking spaces at each site to accommodate vehicles onsite. Outdoor dining areas, fire pits, and decks are included at each site as well. To ensure that pets are not a nuisance, there is a fenced dog run area to keep pets and surrounding farm animals safe. The road will provide access for the fire department to reach each campsite, as well as easy flow of traffic, both coming and going.

Even though our farm is very close to town, the Campground will not put an undue burden on public resources, such as roads. Since the primary occupants of the Campground will be committed to daily activities/ employment on-farm, it may have the effect of actually reducing commuting traffic to and from the farm that would otherwise be required if the farm participants were not able to live on site. Additionally, many guests will be eager to use the new walking and bike path along Teton Creek. In the event that there is regular automobile traffic, we will continue our obligation to maintain N 2000E, a private road of which Deal Come Round LLC (the property owner of the Late Bloomer Ranch land) owns approximately 1/3. Other traffic on this road consists of occasional farm equipment, and the comings and goings of one household off of Creek Bottom Trail. For these reasons, and based upon the other principles we have laid out for the Campground above, we do not believe that the Campground will cause residential disruption, traffic issues, noise, unsightly views, or other such nuisances.

Findings

1. Location Compatibility

The Late Bloomer Ranch is bordered by a private road, a tree farm, a conservation easement, agricultural fields, and the (currently vacant) Targhee Hill Estates subdivision. One residence, as well as the new Teton Creek Corridor trail, are located nearby. Our campground will be integrated into our farm operation and the location is compatible with other uses in the neighborhood.

2. Undue Burden

This small campground will allow us to provide short-term housing for farm employees and guests at the farm. The campground will not place an undue burden on existing public services and facilities in the vicinity.

3. Site Size

The campground will have 7 airstreams (or similar). The farm is 66.36 acres. The CUP area, where the 7 airstreams will be located is 1.15 acres (see attached site plan). The site plan includes landscaping and screening. Our site is large enough to accommodate this campground.

4. Comprehensive Plan Compatibility

Our project supports the goals, policies, and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan. Here are specific examples:

Goal ED 2: Preserve our rural character and heritage and promote local agricultural industries.

Approving this application will help our farm, a local agricultural operation, to succeed.

Policy ED2.6 Encourage policies and resources which enable farms to adapt to changing paradigms.

Allowing us to have these airstreams will allow us to provide short-term housing for our employees in a tight housing market.

Goal ARH 3: Support and enhance agriculture and ranching.

Approving this application will help our farm, a local agricultural operation, to succeed.

Policy ED 4.7 Encourage creative economic solutions such as live-work opportunities and appropriate home businesses.

Allowing us to have these airstreams will allow us to provide on-site housing for our employees.